

St. Emma for their 75th anniversary this month.

Many in western Pennsylvania are familiar with the Sisters of St. Emma's years of service at Saint Vincent College and Arch abbey, where until 1987 they prepared and served thousands of meals to students, the Benedictine Brothers, and even to the Pittsburgh Steelers during their Summer Training Camps at Saint Vincent. From 1987 until the present, the Sisters of St. Emma have continued to be a vibrant part of the area by operating a thriving retreat house just outside of Greensburg, PA. At the retreat house, the Sisters prepare meals, offer hospitality, and a place for hundreds of people annually who come to Saint Emma for spiritual growth and fulfillment.

I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in congratulating the Sisters of St. Emma for their 75th anniversary. It is an honor to represent the Fourth Congressional District of Pennsylvania and a pleasure to salute a dedicated community such as the Sisters of St. Emma.

IN RECOGNITION OF RUTH COTNEY

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dedicated public servant and member of the community, Ms. Ruth Cotney, of Chambers County, Alabama. Ms. Cotney is a well-known and highly respected individual who has served her community, held public office, and is now completing her 50th year of employment at the Chambers County tax office.

In 1955, Ms. Cotney began her career at the Chambers County Courthouse in a time where most tax bills were written by hand. In 1979, Ms. Cotney was appointed by Governor Fob James to replace the retired tax collector. She completed the balance of the term, ran again, and won in 1984 for a 6-year term. She retired in 1991, but continues to work part-time at the tax collector's office.

I am proud to recognize Ms. Cotney today in the House, and congratulate her on her long and fulfilling career in service to the people of Chambers County. I wish her many more years of continued success and service.

SERGEANT HENRY PRENDES MEMORIAL ACT OF 2006 INCREASES PENALTIES FOR COP KILLERS

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce the Sergeant Henry Prendes Memorial Act of 2006 today. This legislation will create a new Federal criminal offense for the killing, the attempt to kill or conspiring to kill, any public safety officer for a public agency that receives Federal funding. This would include State and local police officers, judicial officers, judicial employees, and firefighters.

Mr. Speaker, simply put, this legislation makes it a Federal crime to kill a public safety officer of any type. Under this legislation, a criminal convicted of the above charges will be punished by a fine and imprisonment for no

less than 30 years, or for life, or sentenced to death.

I have named this vitally important piece of legislation after a constituent of mine, SGT Henry Prendes. Sergeant Prendes of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, was killed in the line of duty on Wednesday, February 1, 2006.

SGT Henry Prendes joined the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department on February 26, 1991. He spent his first years patrolling the east Las Vegas neighborhood surrounding Charleston and Lamb Boulevards and was quickly promoted to Field Training Officer. On January 2, 1999, after working 1 year for the narcotics office as a detective, Henry Prendes was promoted to sergeant. As a sergeant he worked for the Crimes against Youth and Family Department, and later as Patrol Sergeant in the South West Area Command.

Sergeant Prendes was a native of Nevada and graduated from Las Vegas High School where he was vice president of his senior class and captain of the football team. He is survived by his wife Dawn and two daughters from a previous marriage, Kylee and Brooke. Sergeant Prendes, along with his family, was a devoutly religious man. He engaged in bible study at home with his wife and mentored children in his spare time. Before he died, he was in the process of building a 17-acre youth camp in Montana called, Creation Camp Jesus.

SGT Henry Prendes could be described as everyone's friend, always having a smile on his face, and always helping those in need. Some help people because they are police officers, but Henry was a police officer to help people.

Mr. Speaker, the pride I feel today in introducing this vitally important piece of legislation is overshadowed by the sorry I feel for the entire Prendes family.

INTRODUCING H.R. 4710, THE JUDICIARY RENT REFORM ACT OF 2006

HON. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce H.R. 4710, the "Judiciary Rent Reform Act of 2006." The purpose of this legislation is to ensure the rent paid by the Federal judiciary is rationally and equitably related to the actual costs of providing their facilities.

It may shock Members to learn that this is not the case nor has it been for some time. In fact, the Federal judiciary pays the General Services Administration (GSA) hundreds of millions of dollars more each year than the actual costs of maintaining and operating buildings. Chief Justice Roberts has characterized this practice as resulting in the judiciary being used "as a profit center for GSA."

By law, GSA is authorized to establish the rent to be paid by the judiciary. GSA's rates are supposed to approximate commercially equivalent rates. Their charges are not subject to negotiation.

Since 1986, the judiciary's annual rent payments to GSA have increased from \$133 million to almost \$920 million. As a percentage of the judiciary's operating budget, these payments have climbed from 15.7 percent to 20 percent. In contrast, rent for executive branch

agencies averages less than one percent of their budgets and no department is charged more than 3 percent.

To cope with soaring GSA rent payments, the courts have been compelled to make difficult choices, including a decision over 18 months to reduce employee ranks by 1,850 positions—a full 8 percent of on board staffing levels.

Consider the irony: the staffing required by the Judiciary Branch is compromised because the Executive Branch charges our courts too much for rent.

In the absence of a swift Congressional response to redress this imbalance, there is little doubt that the continued budgetary pressures, which will result from constantly rising rental costs, will cause the loss of even more court personnel.

The administration of justice should not be compromised because our courts are denied the ability to contain their rental costs. The judiciary has taken available action to reign in these expenses, including adopting a 24-month moratorium on new construction and requesting rent relief from GSA. To date though, GSA has refused to work with the courts in any meaningful way to find a solution.

As Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, I believe Congress has a duty to act to ensure the fair, efficient, and equitable adjudication of all legitimate issues brought before the courts. The use of the courts as a "profit center" can no longer be tolerated.

The bill I am introducing today will put an end to this practice by replacing the "commercially-equivalent" rent calculation that GSA has used with a requirement that the courts pay only for the actual operating expenses incurred in providing space. This simple change will result in a dramatic savings in the judiciary's rent expense.

This change will also give the judiciary needed flexibility, accountability, and responsibility for balancing the requirements imposed by their capital costs, personnel, and non-salary expenses.

The courts are best positioned to know whether the administration of justice will benefit more by hiring new personnel than by constructing a new courthouse or renovating an older one. Our courts should be empowered to make the decision that is in the public interest and that is most likely to enhance their ability to adjudicate and resolve cases.

In his inaugural year-end report on the Federal judiciary, Chief Justice Roberts addressed this issue directly:

The disparity between the judiciary's rent and that of other government agencies, and between the cost to GSA of providing space and the amount charged to the judiciary, is unfair . . . [and] the judiciary must . . . find a long-term solution to the problem of ever-increasing rent payments that drain resources needed for the courts to fulfill their vital mission.

Mr. Speaker, the solution is for Congress to enact the "Judiciary Rent Reform Act of 2006," which will require the Administrator of General Services to charge the judiciary only the actual cost of providing space in federally-owned facilities or the actual costs of procuring and servicing leases in privately-owned space.